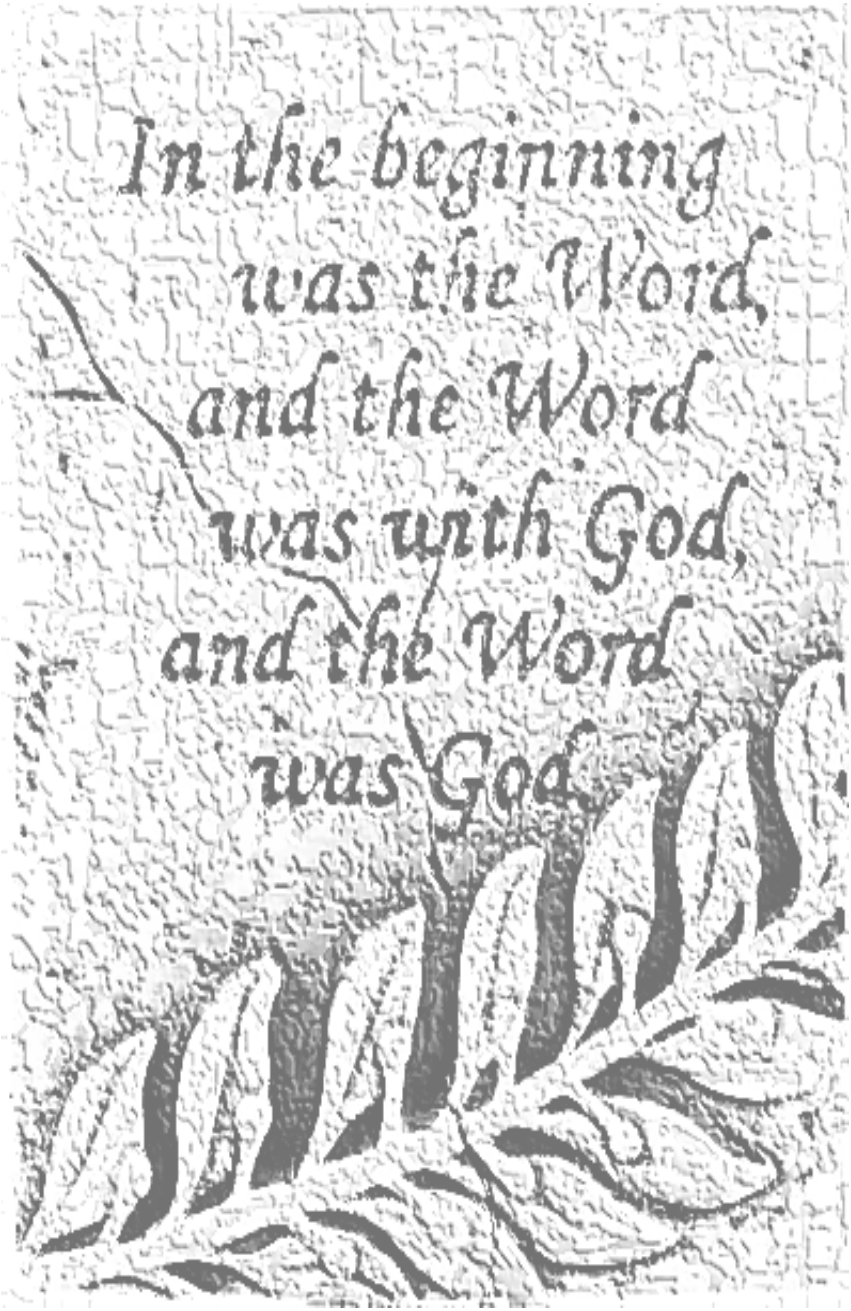

Valley Grace Brethren Church of Armagh, Pennsylvania

Sunday, December 12th, AD 2021

The LORD'S Day

The Twelfth Day of December, *in the Year of our Lord* 2021

Welcome to the worship services of Valley Grace Brethren Church!

Sunday School—9:30 AM.

In our studies in "**God & Government**," we examine the doctrinal shortcomings and flawed assumptions that underlie the spiritually impotent and radically unbiblical "**Social Gospel"** movement.

Morning Worship—10:30 AM.

Call to Worship:* *"What Child is This"* (#126; v. 1)

Invocation.*

Hymn: *"Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"* (#125).

Prayer for Tithes & Offerings.

Scripture Reading: John 1:1-5; 14-18.

Prayer, Praises, & Testimony.

Hymn: *"There's a Song in the Air"* (#121).

Announcemnts.

Hymn: *"Joy to the World!"* (#117).

Dismissal of Youth for Children's Church.

Greeting One Another.

Message: *"THE GLORIOUS CHRIST OF CHRISTMAS."*

Closing Hymn:* *"Away in a Manger"* (#131).

Benediction.*

*The Congregation will please arise, if able.

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Web: *https://valleygbcarmaghpa.webs.com*

Downloadable audio mp3 messages at archive.org (@reesetpje)
Also check out our YouTube Channel (search *"Terry Reese"*)!
Camp Mantowagan website: *https://www.campmantowagan.com*

Wednesday Prayer & Bible Study—4:00 PM.

Our studies in Daniel ch. 4 this week focuses upon the issue of "signs & wonders"—a matter of grave relevence in the contemporary church.

Today's Verses for Reflection:

"He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."— Colossians 1:13-14 (ESV)

Week of Dec. 4-11, 2021

Children's Christmas Party—17 (9 Staff, 3 Parents, 5 Youth)

Sunday School—6; Morning Worship—18
Midweek—4; Church Offering: $777.00

Christmas Gift Boxes

We are collecting **non-perishable food items** or **cash donations** (which will go towards the purchase of a gift card). Please forward monetary donations unto Don or Francis Beach. Distribution will be on 12/22/21.

Christmas Opportunities for Giving

The Armstrong-Indiana-Westmoreland chapter of the Child Evangelism Fellowship (C.E.F.) will be doing our VBS in the last week of June… at NO COST! If you would like to make a private donation to C.E.F., please mail your gifts to the following address:

Child Evangelism Fellowship, P.O. Box 403, Indiana, PA, 15701

Personal love-gifts to our African Missions can be forwarded to the following location: CGBCI Foreign Missions, c/o Pastor Tom Johnson, 222 Marker Dr., Somerset, PA 15501 (814-521-2959).

Christmas Hymn Stories:
"Joy to the World!"

By Pastor Terry L. Reese, 12/12/2021

"And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."—Luke 1:31-33

Lyrics: Isaac Watts (1674-1748); Tune: Handel's *Antioch*, arr. by L. Mason

Isaac Watts, beloved as the "*Godfather of English Hymnody*," was also a prominent nonconformist minister and learned theologian.

But he is best remembered today as the astonishingly prolific author of some 750 hymns! A pioneer in popularizing original poetry (as opposed to Biblical Psalms) for congregational singing, several of his cherished hymns include *"When I Survey the Wondrous Cross," "Our God, Our Help in Ages Past,"* and *"Alas! and Did My Saviour Bleed?"*

Fascinatingly, Dr. Watts *never intended* his hymn *"Joy to the World"* to be a Christmas Carol! First published in his collection *"Psalms of David Imitated"* (1719) under the heading *"The Messiah's Coming and Kingdom,"* Dr. Watts wrote the hymn as a paraphrase of Psalm 98, emphasizing Christ's Second Coming and His Glorious Millennial Reign. Thus, *"Joy to the World"* was originally intended by its author to celebrate our Lord's *second* Advent—as opposed to His *first* Advent at Bethlehem!

However, it is by no means inappropriate that this great hymn ultimately became a "Christmas carol;" in point of fact, many of our familiar New Testament "Christmas" passages have a distinctly *Kingdom-focus*, referencing the Millennial Promises contained within both the Abrahamic and Davidic Covenants. Consider, for example, Gabriel's words to Mary in Luke 1:31-33, or the words of John's father, Zacharias, in Luke 1:68-75. Mary, in her beautiful song, the *Magnificat*, celebrates of the coming rule of Messiah in Luke 1:46-56. Dr. Watts' hymn serves as a reminder to us today that the child who was born at Christmas is *also* the suffering Christ of Good Friday who rose from the dead on Easter, and who is soon coming to rule and reign forevermore! AMEN!